



# YELLOWSTONE MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER



Volume I Issue 6

June 2012

## Current Volunteer Opportunities:\*

Ext. Office Phone, etc.  
Metra Sq. Ft. Garden  
Farmers Market Info. Booth  
C.A.R.E. After School Program  
Special K Ranch  
Courthouse Planter  
Salvation Army/Vista  
Fair Judge  
Home on the Range Garden  
Moss Mansion  
Zoo MT/Geranium Fest  
New Visions/Passages  
Annual Flower Show  
Meadowlark House  
Women's Prison Garden  
Friendship House  
St. Andrew's Com. Garden

\*Please contact Amy Grandpre to see who is the current contact for these projects.

[agrandpre@co.yellowstone.mt.gov](mailto:agrandpre@co.yellowstone.mt.gov)  
Or call her at: 406.256.2821

## Contact Information:

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Send your submissions for newsletter to [ymastergardener@gmail.com](mailto:ymastergardener@gmail.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for submission in following month's edition

## Editors:

- ◆ Ann Guthals
- ◆ Bob Wicks
- ◆ Elaine Allard
- ◆ Marcella Manuel
- ◆ Mary McLane
- ◆ Sharon Wetsch
- ◆ Sheri Kisch
- ◆ Tracy L. Livingston

## Shirley Spildie by Bob Wicks

It's hard to believe that it's already June! This month's featured Master Gardener is Shirley Spildie. Shirley has been in the Master Gardener program since 1996 which was 2 years after the start of the program. Shirley was born right here in Billings and lived here until she was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. At that time her family moved to Livingston and remained there until Shirley was a senior in high school. Shirley's family moved back to Billings where she attended Eastern Montana College and earned her 2 year teaching certificate in Elementary Education. She taught school for a time and then married. After Shirley got married she returned to school and earned her 4-year teaching degree. She was then a housewife and also a substitute teacher for many years. She was so good at teaching that she was working almost full time. At one point Shirley had to tell the school



district that she needed 2 weeks off to finish her kitchen remodel. Shirley's daughter is also a teacher and Shirley volunteered in her class room for years. She also worked for Billings Construction Supply in the book-keeping department to help balance the books. One time Shirley and 9 other people spent a lot of time looking for a one dollar mistake. They talked about just putting the dollar in but that was not the right way.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## MARK YOUR CALENDERS- JUNE EVENTS

June 1 - 2:00-4:00 pm- **Level 2 Master Gardener Exams.** (First Baptist Church)

June 4 - 6:30-8:30 pm - **Level 2 Master Gardener Exams** (Courthouse -Room 403A)

June 2, 11 am – **First Annual Master Gardeners Association Picnic @ Zoo MT**

Potluck, plant exchange, planting in sensory garden in honor of Julie Halvorsen (Assn. will provide beverages) Past and present MGs and their families are invited; Please RSVP to Amy.

June 10<sup>th</sup> (Sun) 2:00-3:30 or June 11<sup>th</sup> - (Mon) 10:00 –11:30 **Water Gardening Tour & Workshop**

Elaine Allard's Water Gardens tour and option to create your own mini water garden  
Location- 915 Moon Valley Road, Billings. For more information Phone 252-2623

June 14 (Thursday) - **Bridger Plant Center Tour & Open House**

Please RSVP with Amy if interested in riding in county van (leaving at 8:00 am). Can drive own vehicle. Hours 7:30 am - 4:00....county van will arrive about 10:00 am

June 21 (5:00-7:00 pm.) **First Riverstone Gardeners' Market of the Season**

Weeds – Get them while small. A hula or stirrup hoe makes quick work and a less tiring job.

### Helpful Hint

Growing potatoes? The Colorado Potato Beetle can be a problem if not vigilante. Look for eggs on the undersides of leaves and squish them. Fun. If they are already feeding on the leaves, you can sprinkle cornmeal on the leaves for them to ingest. For more information on the life cycle and picture identification click on <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/images/M1200-1-lg.jpg>.

Did you know that horticulture cornmeal gluten can be used as a fungicide (black spot and athlete's foot), pre-emergent for weeds in the lawn and garden, a stimulator for compost, to control algae in ponds and more? Preen makes it. It's the one with the purple lid. Read the ingredients and directions. You can also buy it through Planet Natural in Bozeman for \$48 at 50lbs, <http://www.planetnatural.com/site/corn-corn-gluten-meal.html>. Ace Hardware can get it for you also if you ask, for about the same price.

For more information you can click on <http://www.dirtdoctor.com> or <http://www.hort.iastate.edu/research/gluten/> Submitted by Sheri Kisch

## Shirley Spildie (continued)

Shirley learned her love for gardening from her grandmother and mother. She remembers working in their gardens and working in the Victory Garden in her family's yard during WWII. Shirley has gardened in Billings, Great Falls and Helena but didn't get really involved in it until she moved back to Billings. Shirley is active in the after school program and the Geranium Fest in the Master Gardener program. She is also very active in the Thumbs-R-Green Garden Club and the National Garden Club. Shirley is a judge for flower shows and also is an instructor who trains judges in design in the National Garden Club. Shirley has traveled the Midwest and northern part of the U.S. to train judges. Recently Shirley was featured in the Billings Gazette in an article called Flower-ful Ministry. Shirley's passion in gardening is anything that is blooming at the time. She especially enjoys the spring when plants start to bloom. In the past she has painted landscapes in oil and water color and enjoyed sewing.

Shirley's family is her husband Gene who is very supportive and wonderful, daughters Roxanne and Laurie and a son Duane. She also has 7 grandchildren and 3 great-grand children. Shirley's tip is to keep busy in your gardens, growing things for the color and learning. Her quote is "If surrounded by greenery, you're happier". I think these are great words to remember. Once again I am very proud to tell people that I am a Master Gardener because of people like Shirley. Her history and spirit are inspiring to all gardeners. She is an active member of our group and setting the bar a little higher for us to reach.

## Container Water Gardening

Container water gardens are a great way to experience the joys of water gardening without the commitment of larger more permanent pond. Miniature water gardens can be created in wide variety of containers.



Container water gardens can be established in pots as small as 14 inches in diameter and 7 inches in depth. Larger container water gardens can be created in half whiskey barrels or old bath tubs.

## Water Gardening

By Elaine Allard



From the earliest times man has always been drawn to water. Great civilizations developed around water. Even today, when we think of a place we would like to go for a vacation or recreation—water usually plays an important part in it. Whether it be a stream to fish in, a lake to swim or boat in, or an ocean shore to lounge around on. It is no wonder that people have an interest in having some kind of water feature that can create that same kind of feeling in their own yard. A well-placed water garden can serve as the central focal point of your landscaping. A water garden adds sound, movement, reflections and an opportunity to use plants in an entirely new way. Therefore, adding a water garden to your yard may be something you seriously want to consider and is bound to give you great pleasure and a wonderful feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment.

Water gardens can vary greatly in size, shape, complexity and cost. Your water garden can be as simple as an inexpensive water-tight pot or as large and complex as your imagination and finances will go. Today, we have the advantage of improved technology and many products that have been specifically designed for water gardening that were not available in the past. Water gardening products have become easier to find, cheaper to buy and simpler to use.

Adding plants is the most rewarding and exciting addition you can make to your water feature. There are a countless number of aquatic and moisture-loving plants that are fun and easy to grow in and around the edge of your pond. One of the easiest to grow and maintain is a hardy water lily with its large floating leaves and colorful blooms. Rushes, reeds, miniature cattails, water iris, arrowhead plants, and mare's tail are just a few of the plants that will thrive in a wet environment. Also, fast-growing annual plants such as water hyacinths, water lettuce and frog bit are a fun addition to any water feature. The use of plants will not only add greatly to the beauty of your pond, but will also help remove nutrients from the water and shade the water; both of which will making it less hospitable for algae to grow. Once plants have started to establish, fish can be added to the pond. Getting the right balance of plants and fish in your pond will bring the ponds ecosystem into balance while adding beautiful greenery, color and motion making your water garden the cameo of your yard.

Nevertheless, before putting a water garden in you should do some advanced planning and thinking. There are a great number of books written with a wealth of information on pond building, maintenance, fish and pond plants. Also, much can be learned from studying natural ponds, streambeds, waterfalls and the plants and animals that live in and around them. The best water gardens try to imitate nature and creating their own unique ecosystem. Another great source of information can be gained from visiting with people in our area that already have water gardens. They may help you by telling you things that have worked well for them and the things they wish they had done differently.

Also, I am hoping you will be able to tour my water gardens on Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup> (2:00 pm) or Monday June 11<sup>th</sup> (10:00 am). Besides touring, I'll talk about planning, construction maintenance, plant selection and plant care and try to answer any questions you may have about water gardening. For those of you who are interested in creating your own container water garden, I will have an assortment of aquatic plants available and will offer them at wholesale price.



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<http://www.co.yellowstone.mt.gov/extension/horticulture/mastergard.asp>

#### June Birthdays:

2<sup>nd</sup> - Doreen Gates  
7<sup>th</sup> - Kathleen Hansen  
8<sup>th</sup> - Tracy Livingston  
28<sup>th</sup> - Terri Kelleher

### Future Events

#### Level 3 MG Course

When: Aug. 23 to Aug. 25  
Where: Montana State Univ. in Bozeman  
Who: MGs certified for Level 1 and 2 and who have applied and been accepted into the program (limited space availability)

#### State MG Celebration for all MGs in Montana

When: Friday Sept. 21  
Where: Billings  
What: Tour of DanWalt Gardens 9/21, dinner at Holiday Inn Zoo Montana then Bridger Plant Center, lunch on 9/22



## DELIGHTFUL DAHLIAS

*By Ann Guthals*

One of the joys of gardening is sharing tips and favorites with other gardeners. One year my mother-in-law showed me some unassuming green plants that she promised would produce spectacular blooms. These happened to be “dinner plate” dahlias, so when they bloomed not only were they colorful, they were huge!

Those first dahlias I was introduced to were perennial tubers. Dahlias originated in Central America and are not cold-hardy. In our Zone, the tubers must be lifted from the ground after the first killing frost and stored in a cool space for the winter, to be re-planted in the spring. That seemed like more work than I was able to give at the time—then I discovered the beauty and ease of annual dahlias! Most of my flower garden is now planted with perennials, but I have saved room for these delightfully-colored annual dahlias to be planted every year.

Dahlias are easy to grow and like full sun. They are unscented, but their color attracts pollinators. Their blooms resemble those of their relatives, zinnias and chrysanthemums. Dahlias work well as cut flowers, but I generally leave mine in the garden to enchant me with their gorgeous colors while I work on the vegetable beds. They do not like the frost at all—they are one of the first flowers killed by frost. But they bloom all summer and are well worth the space devoted to them.

Dahlias range in height from 1 foot to 6 feet or more and the flowers range in size from 2 inches to a foot across (those “dinner plates”). A gardener would want to have a planned space in mind before selecting varieties and expect to stake the tallest varieties.

### EXTRA GARDEN PRODUCE?

The following organizations & agencies accept garden produce from local community gardens:

- Family Services
- Billings Food Bank
- Salvation Army
- Adult Alliance Resource (they prepare food for Senior Centers in Billings)
- Montana Women's & Family Shelter
- Montana Rescue Mission  
Riverstone Health (weekly farmer's market—see above)

### BILLINGS-AREA FARMERS MARKETS

Billings Farmer's Market—7/21 to 10/6 downtown between 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. N.; Sat. 8-12 and Wed. 4:30-8:00 pm.

Laurel Farmer's Market—7/18 to 9/26 in the Town Square; 4 pm Wednesdays.

Riverstone Health Farmer's Market—6/21 to 10/4; Thursdays 5-7 pm.

Red Lodge Farmer's Market—7/6 to 10/5 in the Lion's Park; 4 pm Wednesdays.